

Message Text

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ACTION STR-08

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ADP-00 PM-09 NSC-10 SS-15 RSC-01 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00 MC-02 AID-20 COME-00 EB-11

FRB-02 TRSE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12 CIEP-02 LAB-06 SIL-01

OMB-01 RSR-01 /130 W

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R 190744 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3262

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 4823

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRD EIND JA

SUBJ: IMPORT RESTRICTIONS - COMPUTERS AND LOGS

REF TOKYO 4756

SUMMARY: EMBASSY RECEIVED WORD PRIME MINISTER TANAKA WAS QUITE EXERCISED AT U. S. REQUEST THAT HE POSTPONE COMPUTER IMPORT LIBERALIZATION DECISION UNTIL AFTER MAY 7 TRADE TALKS BUT EVENTUALLY IS SAID TO HAVE AGREED. U. S. REQUEST TO RESTRAIN LOG IMPORTS ALSO SAID BE DIFFICULT POLITICALLY FOR PRIME MINISTER. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING EVENING APRIL 18, UNDER WARMING INFLUENCE AFTER DINNER BRANDY, JAPANESE FOREIGN OFFICE OFFICIAL TOOK EMBASSY'S ECON/ MIN ASIDE TO SAY THAT TSURUMI WAS GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL WHO INFORMED PRIME MINISTER TANAKA OF U. S. REQUESTS THAT PRIME MINISTER DELAY DECISION RE IMPORT LIBERALIZATION COMPUTERS AND THAT JAPANESE CURTAIL LOG IMPORTS FROM US BY 15 PERCENT.

2. TANAKA SAID TO HAVE RESENTED US REQUEST ON COMPUTERS ON GROUNDS THAT QTE US IS INTERVENING
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IN INTERNAL JAPANESE DECISION- MAKING PROCESS WHICH IS INAPPROPRIATE UNQTE. ECON/ MIN REPLIED THAT HE HOPED WORD COULD BE SENT BACK TO PRIME MINISTER TO EFFECT THAT ACTUALLY WE WERE TRYING TO BE HELPFUL SO THAT PRIME MINISTER WOULD NOT PUBLICLY COMMIT HIMSELF TO A POSITION WHICH ON THE BASIS FURTHER CONSULTATION HE MIGHT WISH TO CHANGE BUT WHICH WOULD BE MORE DIFFICULT TO DO IF PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT HAD ALREADY BEEN MADE.

3. TANAKA REPORTEDLY HAD HOPED ANNOUNCE LIBERALIZATION DECISION IN FEW DAYS AT SAME TIME THAT ANNOUNCEMENT WOULD BE MADE ON CAPITAL LIBERALIZATION PROGRAM. ACCORDING TO THIS REPORT, TANAKA AT FIRST REFUSED TO DELAY ANNOUNCEMENT AND ONLY AFTER LENGTHY DISCUSSION AGREED TO TSURUMI'S ARGUMENTATION THAT IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE TO DO SO. UNDER QUESTIONING BY ECON/ MIN, FOREIGN OFFICE OFFICIAL EXPRESSED VIEW THAT POSITION OF JAPANESE RE COMPUTERS MIGHT HAVE SOME GIVE IN IT RE SHORTENING WAITING PERIOD TO SOMEWHAT UNDER 36 MONTHS BUT QTE MORE THAN 24 UNQTE.

4. IN FOREIGN OFFICE OFFICIAL'S VIEW, TANAKA'S UNHAPPINESS CAUSED BY JUXTAPOSITION OF TWO US REQUESTS -- FIRST, PROPOSAL THAT JAPAN LIMIT IMPORT US LOGS AND SECOND TO INDICATION US STILL DISSATISFIED WITH PLANNED GOJ IMPORT ACTION ON COMPUTERS DESPITE INTENSIVE JAPANESE EFFORTS.

5. BOTH US REQUESTS SAID CREATE SIGNIFICANT DOMESTIC PROBLEMS FOR TANAKA. AGREEMENT TO US REQUEST ON LOGS LIKELY CAUSE FURTHER PRICE RISE LUMBER IN JAPAN AND COMPOUND HIGHLY SENSITIVE ISSUE OF SHARPLY RISING HOUSING COSTS, E. G., IN EFFORT ALLAY STRONG DOMESTIC DISCONTENT, TANAKA YESTERDAY INSTRUCTED MITI ATTEMPT CURB PRICE RISE IN TWO OTHER MAJOR BUILDING MATERIALS, STEEL AND CEMENT.

6. EARLIER COMPUTER LIBERALIZATION THAN THAT INDICATED WOULD PLACE TANAKA AT ODDS WITH INFLUENTIAL COMPUTER INDUSTRY AND ELEMENTS STRONGLY
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ENTRENCHED BUREAUCRACY.

7. ABOVE REPORT RECEIVED FROM MIDDLE LEVEL
ECONOMIC BUREAU FONOFF OFFICIAL NOT DIRECTLY
INVOLVED IN TWO QUESTIONS BUT WHO KNOWN TO BE
CLOSE TO TSURUMI. WE BELIEVE IT PROBABLY
REASONABLY ACCURATE ACCOUNT.
INGERSOLL

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*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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